

Mr. GUTIERREZ. That money should be saving lives, not ending them.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. GUTIERREZ. That is why I demand the FBI and the Attorney General investigate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will suspend.

Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair and not to a perceived viewing audience.

INNOVATIVE APPRENTICESHIPS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. FERGUSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the PARTNERS Act, legislation I am introducing this morning with my friend, Representative BONAMICI from Oregon.

Our bill would establish a grant program to support the creation and expansion of innovative apprenticeships that prepare our workers for 21st century careers.

In the Third District of Georgia, the CEC in Newnan has led Georgia by implementing an apprenticeship model, and since then, we have seen apprenticeships continue to expand across our great State.

I, along with Ms. BONAMICI, are introducing the PARTNERS Act today to bring more programs like this to students and workers across the Nation.

By funding this grant with already existing H1-B visa fees, which are collected from foreign visa applicants, we are ensuring that workers can receive immediate work-based training at no cost to the American taxpayer.

APPRENTICESHIPS AND WORK-BASED LEARNING PROGRAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be on the floor this morning to introduce bipartisan legislation with my colleague on the Education and Workforce Committee, Congressman DREW FERGUSON from Georgia.

Our bill, Promoting Apprenticeships Through Regional Training Networks for Employers' Required Skills Act, or PARTNERS Act, will help close the skills gap by increasing opportunities for small- and medium-sized businesses to establish apprenticeships and work-based learning programs.

When I visit communities in northwest Oregon, I hear from many Oregonians who still feel left behind because they don't have the skills they need to compete in today's economy. They are not alone. Many jobs today do not require a 4-year degree, but do require more than a high school diploma. In fact, those jobs make up about 53 percent of today's labor market, but only 43 percent of today's workers are trained at this level.

This creates a skills gap, leaving businesses struggling to find workers

with appropriate skills, and workers without meaningful pathways to better paying jobs.

I hear from employers and workforce organizations about the importance of a qualified workforce. They want to identify new opportunities to strengthen skills training.

Apprenticeships and work-based learning programs are a win-win. They provide individuals with paid, on-the-job training and classroom instruction. Employers can align training with the skills they need at their workplaces, and workers can learn while they earn.

Unfortunately, small- and medium-sized businesses often lack the infrastructure and resources to establish apprenticeships or work-based learning programs on their own. So the PARTNERS Act addresses this by establishing a grant program to support the creation and expansion of industry and sector partnerships that will help small- and medium-sized businesses develop work-based learning programs and provide support programs for workers.

Industry and sector partnerships will bring together employers, education, training, labor, and community-based organizations to develop work-based learning programs that benefit workers and the economy as a whole.

In Oregon, these partnerships could address, for example, workforce development needs in rapidly growing sectors like healthcare and technology.

Under the PARTNERS Act, the partnerships would use grant funds to recruit workers, develop training curriculum, and provide workers with access to tools, work attire, transportation, childcare services, and mentorship support. These support services help businesses retain employees and help workers balance caring for and providing for their families.

Importantly, Mr. Speaker, this bill results in no additional cost to taxpayers because it authorizes the use of 50 percent of the funds deposited in the H1-B nonimmigrant petition account, and these will be used by the Department of Labor for the partnership grants. This funding source was suggested by the administration in a June 2017 executive order on apprenticeships.

Through stronger investments and work-based learning programs, we can build pathways to get more people back to work, to provide our Nation's businesses with the workforce that will improve productivity and efficiency.

I thank Mr. FERGUSON for his leadership, and I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting this bipartisan legislation that will help people in our districts across the country access good jobs.

TAX REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, today we will begin a journey that has

been represented to be a lifeline for the American people in long awaited tax reform.

Sad to say that this is not a bipartisan bill. In addition, it is a bill that will cause a great deal of challenge to the American people.

For example, in moving firms across the ocean, overseas, the American people should know that those companies, in the construct of this bill, will cause them to be exempt from taxes forever.

In a discussion this morning, I heard that it will not boost the economy. The American people should know that it will destroy, undermine, crush the economy.

The representation of the level of growth is a misnomer. Take, for example, in 1986, in the tax reform, there was no surge in job creation after the Reagan tax cuts. There was no high numbers of blossoming jobs. Many in my congressional district need jobs.

It will be borrowing from the future and it will be a burden on our children, our children's children, and their children. But the most devastating part is the bill that we will be paying, the actual dollars to pay down the deficit.

Of course, it should be known that we have examples that no jobs will be created. In 2004, for example, when there was a repatriation from companies regarding their taxes, there was no creation of jobs that we can even recognize. Most of the money went for stock buybacks.

Now, I know that sounds completely technical, but let me be very clear. The question has to be: What will the middle class working families get?

I can assure you, it will be close to zero.

There are 2 million households, for example, in the State of Texas that will be impacted by not allowing the exemption of State and local taxes. We don't know whether mortgage deductions will be allowed, charitable tax credits. So if you have in some way been deducting, for example, those State and local taxes, you will not be able to do them anymore. That will be a great burden on the working families of America.

So my caution to the business community as well as the small businesses, families: Be very careful what you buy into. We will have discussions to provide you with that detailed analysis. The key is a distribution table. What and whom will get the most money.

As the bill is presently written, middle class working families, don't look for relief in the Ryan-McConnell tax bill. It will all go to the top 1 percent. They will relish while, you might not be jealous, but you will certainly be poorer for it.

OPIOID CRISIS

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to also entertain the questions about the pending opioid announcement of this White House. I want to bring to the attention the article in The New Yorker on the empire of pain.